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Christ and Custom

BY FREDERICK W. NORWOOD

I find in him no fault at all, but ye have a custom. John 18:38-39.

PONTIUS PILATE was unaware that he was speaking through a kind of spiritual microphone and that the words of his lips would travel through all places and through all times, speaking to multitudes of people of every type, of every class, of every race, who would be found listening-in with the ear-phones of solitude upon them to the secret voices within their own souls, and that also the word would be broadcast amidst many confusing atmospheres through whole societies, through whole civilizations. "I find in him no fault at all."

Pontius Pilate was also unaware that he was stating the antithesis concerning Christ in a very drastic and abiding fashion. The Man himself—the customs of men. "No fault in him"—"but ye have a custom." No man could have put his finger more unerringly upon the crux of the problem concerning Christ.

Yet if you had asked Pontius Pilate, I think he would have admitted that for him, his judgment of Jesus was a secondary matter. He was not greatly concerned with Jesus, at least at the beginning, whatever he became at the end. Jesus was for him a mere pawn in the great game of governmental sagacity. Governors are like that. They can seldom deal with an individual case upon its merits; they are always watching and listening for the more imperative needs of the hour.

Pilate was much more conscious of the influential Jews who wanted a certain thing done, and of the restless, turbulent multitude that crowded the city of Jerusalem at the Passover time, than he was directly of Jesus himself. There were reasons why this trial should not be protracted. It was held very early in the morning, as you perceive from the record. The Man was impaled upon the cross by 9 o'clock. Pilate's wife had just wakened from a dream and scarcely had time to send a warning message to her husband before the judgment was passed. It was very necessary that this matter should be

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settled quickly and quietly, lest a riot should take place. Pilate would have been more sagacious, speaking as a governor only, if he had pronounced an unqualified verdict against Jesus. It was the sudden revolt of his soul that made him say, "I find no fault in him." But to Pilate, that was not the important thing. He was hurried, he was worried, and he had many things to think about that day.

If you had asked Pontius Pilate, I think he would also have admitted that the custom he invoked was not important in his sight. It just flashed into his mind with a suggestion of a way out of the dilemma. He remembered that it was a custom among the Jews to release some prisoner at the Passover time. It occurred to him that perhaps the popular whim might set Jesus free if he invoked the custom. "You have a custom that one should be released unto you at the Passover: shall I release unto you this man, or Barabbas?"

I FIND NO FAULT IN HIM

It was a compromise, and the verdict was a hasty and somewhat impromptu one, and yet there it is—for all these hundreds of years the word of Pilate has been ringing in the hearts of men, "I find no fault in him," and for all these hundreds of years the claims of Christ have been tested not on the ground of that verdict but amidst the challenge of men's customs. There stands the Man, immovable—here surge the customs of men, forever changing, forever presenting new faces, and whatever men may think of Jesus himself, the crucial issue is how they accommodate him to their customs or their customs to him.

It is not for me to paint the lily of the faultlessness of Jesus. The soul of mankind stands abashed before him. But it could never have entered into the mind of Pilate that this was the guise under which the perfect example among mankind should be presented to men. A man with his hands bound, his back bleeding, his brow crowned with thorns and with a cross waiting for him—it could never have occurred to him that he was presenting to the world the challenge of a perfect character which the world would accept. "To the Greeks," St. Paul said once, "the cross is foolishness," and not only to those who are Greeks by race but to those who are Greeks by sentiment, to the aesthetes and the philosophers the cross is foolishness. But there it stands!

Always about the figure of Christ there is the element of contradiction and of challenge. If we have kept on through these hundreds of years declaring that we find no fault in him, it is a curious thing, because he contradicts us everywhere and all the time. His highest values are not the values we ourselves cling to most persistently. His methods are not the methods to which we are inclined to subscribe. He challenges us all along the line and at every gate of our hearts. There is a wonderful contradiction in the heart of things, since all through these centuries men have been listening-in to Pilate saying "I find no fault in him," yet persistently opposing to him other transient customs.

Even to this day, the chief emphasis upon the claims of Jesus is the simple telling of his story. That accounts for nine-tenths of the wonder of his power throughout the centuries. Were that story not there, the institutions and the influences of Christianity could never have risen superior to such multitudes of customs, could never have endured as they have done. Even to this day, anywhere, everywhere, among not only his followers but his enemies, among not only the people of his race but the people of all races, to tell his story, to get them to look at him is to cause them to say, "I find no fault in him."

ONE VOICE THAT SPEAKS TO THE SOUL

It is as if there is one voice in the midst of the ages which persists in speaking to the soul in its own right as a soul. Whatever be its customs, whatever be its confusions, this voice of Jesus speaks directly to the soul as to a king, and the soul responds with a verdict with which there is nothing else in history to compare for unanimity.

I do not want to say too much. I do not want to be carried away upon the wings of devotion or enthusiasm. I would rather say too little. I will say this: that when you have named Jesus you had better be done. There is not another name to be mentioned that has called forth from the human soul this unanimous verdict of appreciation, "I find no fault in him."

Is that too much to say? I do not want to exaggerate. I cannot exaggerate if I tell the truth, but I would rather throw away the millions and take the units. I will come down as low as you like; I will talk the language of banality and say the thing that cannot be disputed or denied: there is no one else in all the ages who has so convinced the soul of man as Jesus has done.

But that does not dispose of the difficulty; in some respects it increases it, for the greater the tribute you pay to Jesus the greater is the conflict between him and the customs of men. Christ was crucified upon the customs of men, not upon a cross of wood but upon the cross of customs. The wood of his cross has moulded away long ago. The custom of crucifixion has itself vanished away, but Christ is still crucified upon the customs of men, and the crux of the problem is the challenge between that perfect personality and the everchanging customs that bring him constantly to new trials.

You know the objection that is frequently brought against Christianity, and never more, I think, than it is at this moment. It runs something like this: We do not dispute the grandeur of Jesus, but the customs of men will never do anything except crucify those who practice his teachings. He is too fine, too holy, too high, too pure; the customs of men inevitably make a cross for him. Give us a king who will go before us into battle, give us leadership that will lead to a crown and not to a cross, for still the struggle between men is the struggle to gain the crown and inflict the cross.

WHY THE WORLD IS ADRIFT TODAY

Now that is the challenge *contra* Christ; it is ringing round the world today more loudly perhaps than at any other time in history; and what shall we say? Do not men still steer by the stars and by that invisible attraction of some invisible reality we call the Magnetic Pole? Some day there will arise a man or men who will make it clear to us again that it is because we are not steering by the stars that we are plunging so heavily in the trough

of the trackless seas. We are just hugging the coasts, tracing the way by headlands and capes, timidly seeking to avoid rocks and shoals or creeping into sheltering harbors.

The supreme tragedy of our day is that men are not steering by the stars. I mean they are not at home in the universe. The universe to them is dead and without moral significance. But it is not a dead universe, and some day, somehow, there will come back to men a sense of the unity of life, a reborn conviction that after all we have got to organize the whole of life in terms of the universe. We have not just got to plunder the earth to get what goods are locked up there. We have not just got to jostle our fellowmen to get whatever advantage

FREDERICK W. NORWOOD

we may gain in competition. We cannot really live until we live in unity with the Creator and the creation. We still must steer by the star of the influence of Christ, and that has to be tested at last as trees are tested by their fruits. The strange and wonderful thing is that the pull of this Man has held humanity as no other grip has held it, and led humanity and lured it and inspired the hearts of the noblest among men. "The foolishness of God," as St. Paul says, "is wiser than the wisdom of men, and the weakness of God than the strength of men." I am not proclaiming the monkish idea of the cross, as a sacrifice to appease the Deity, but men must learn to be willing to suffer for the salvation of mankind and cease to call those great who plunder mankind.

GROWING IN CHRIST

The other charge they bring against the followers of Christ concerns the sharp contrast between his faultlessness and their faultiness. It must be accepted. Sometimes by our customs of thinking, of speaking, of acting, and our social customs, they who acknowledge him seem to pour scorn upon his claims. That is the charge they bring against the followers of Jesus. Yes, but it is a charge that to a great extent has its cure in the heart of it. For so long as men acknowledge the Christ, they are susceptible to loftier moods, to repentance, to renewed striving; and real discipleship of Jesus means few things more than this, the overhauling of our own customs, our customs of thinking and acting and our social customs. That is where discipleship comes to its crux. Unless a man is challenging his customs he is not acquitting his Christ. Growing in Christ means very largely growing beyond our customs, breaking their power, moving on. Oh, how difficult it is often enough! We find ourselves placed in circumstances where the customs that are contrary to Christ seem inevitable and unbreakable; they engulf us. There are many men who are conscious of a cleavage between their daily living and their daily praying. The cynic would say they were hypocritical, but they are not entirely that. We do not know much about life if we do not know that there are thousands of times in any vital person's life when he is held in the grip of customs that he cannot break, which compel him to do things that he still deeply resents. What can a man do then?

CRUCIFIED UPON MEN'S CUSTOMS

Well, at least he can keep a secret place in his heart where he pays his reverence to the Christ, and he can learn to gather spiritual strength either to break or to endure nobly the conditions that are so contrary to him. A man is not defeated so long as he is keeping up the fight. For as long as the world endures, Christ will be the symbol of conflict. Many and many a custom has been remedied and ennobled through his influence. But again comes the challenge of recurring customs and the significant and wonderful thing about Jesus is that his power of inspiring resistance is not broken, it does not come to an end. He is infinitely more challenging today than he was in the day when Pontius Pilate passed his judgment. He is challenging the world at every point today. He is continually being crucified upon men's customs, but, just as inevitably rising from the dead, ascending still, swaying the hearts of his people, inspiring them, generating within them that secret resistance which finally undermines established customs and causes them to fall.

The last word to say about Jesus is a word concerning God. God was in Christ. That is at least the irreducible minimum for any Christian. God stands for those values. God inspires this conflict against wrongful customs. God makes the Christ the judge of men, even as men are judging him. God is in Christ, and the soul that responds to Christ must be a fighting soul as well as a trusting soul, fighting against the contrary customs and protesting with a voice that speaks in spite of one's self, "I find no fault in him."

That is the kind of drawn battle which Christ inevitably wins. His triumph emerges when his people courageously shatter the customs and acclaim his lordship.

A Godlike Race

By Arlo Ayres Brown

That ye may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. . . . And if ye salute your brethren only what do ye more than others? Do not even the gentiles the same? Ye therefore shall be perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect. Matthew 5:45, 47, 48.

THE Sermon on the Mount is the Christian way of life in miniature. No other piece of literature of like length has such far-reaching implications for the transforming of the human race. Given this message in three chapters of Matthew, plus the life, death and resurrection of Jesus who gave the message, you have enough to save our civilization or any other if it can be accepted. This Sermon on the Mount has also been called the constitution of the kingdom of God. Jesus meant by the "kingdom of God" the society of people who follow the ideals of God as revealed in himself. The constitution of this new society first describes the citizens and then lays down some of the laws or principles which must govern these citizens. It was a wise statement of Robert E. Speer when he said recently, "If one can be certain that his principles are right, he need not worry about the consequences."

The purpose of these principles is, according to Jesus, "that ye may be sons of your Father who is in heaven." He adds, "And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? Do not even the gentiles the same? Ye therefore shall be perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect." While a few writers like Spengler would denounce the Sermon on the Mount as pernicious, the vast majority of thinkers have pronounced it a classic, one of the rarest gems in all literature. They divide on the question as to whether or not it expresses simply a beautiful dream of an ideal society, or offers a practical guide for conduct. Our problem this morning is to try to discover whether or not it is practical enough to be "good news" because it is "a way out" for this bewildered generation.

DEBASING THE COMMON MAN

The reasons which make this question one of immediate interest are numerous. But foremost among these is the startling fact that faith in the possibilities of the common man hangs in the balance. On no other ground can we account for the rise of dictatorships instead of democracies. Whether forces in control are conservative as in Italy and Germany, or radical as in Russia, they believe that the common man cannot be trusted to act for the common good unless he gives up his own freedom to think and submits to regimentation in industry, education and religion. The "forgotten man" is in his present plight not simply because great industrialists have treated him as a number rather than as a person, but also because he himself has questioned his own value.

Many factors have produced this feeling. Among these is the inability of millions to secure employment and thus to provide for the needs of themselves and their families. Those who are at work can have little conception of how unemployment batters down one's self-respect. If he can feel that his work was eminently satisfactory and that he was in no sense to blame for his loss of position, that will help some. Nevertheless, even in such a case it will require other spiritual resources in addition to a tremendous use of will power to keep up his morale. That millions have done this so well in the difficult days through which we are passing is a very significant evidence of their worth.

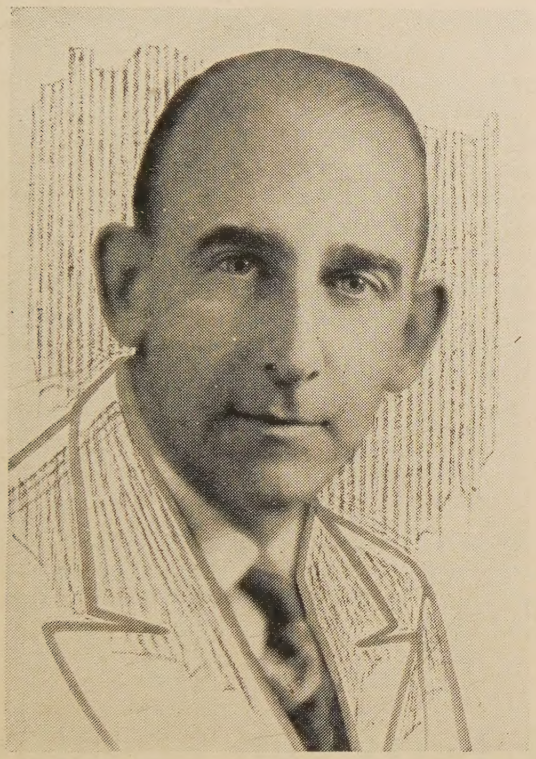
But back of the years of economic strain in America other forces were at work to weaken the faith of the average man in his own powers. Science has laid us all under tribute for her benefits. If she has not proved to be a new messiah, she has at least rendered services of incalculable value for the elevation of society. But there has been a vast difference in scientists. The greatest of them have been reverent, open-minded seekers for truth, but in their train have followed a host of cocksure dogmatic ones who in speech and writings have made the common people believe that man is simply a cog in a vast machine with little capacity for self-decision and no actual responsibility for his conduct. Theodore Dreiser, Sinclair Lewis, and most of the writers of fiction in the last twenty years have assumed the truth of this philosophy. They do not expect heroic action on the part of their characters, nor do they blame the vicious and weak for their crimes. They feel sorry for their villains while for the most part they despise their heroes and heroines.

BEHAVIORISTIC THEORIES

So rooted in popular thinking is this philosophy that Clarence Darrow bases his case on it and actually gets a favorable verdict from a learned judge, saving from death two murderers on the ground that society was more to blame for the crime than the highly educated young men who could not help themselves. It would be a miracle if a Godlike race should grow up in such an atmosphere. The debacle of trusted leaders who could not distinguish honesty from dishonesty in the handling of trust funds, is not surprising when the public expects so little moral integrity in its ranks.

The educators must also take their share of the blame. Great progress has been made in lower and higher education in this twentieth century. A host of men and women whom we could name have put us in their debt, but here again we who are in education have too often followed false lights. Behaviorism in psychology has some values, but behaviorism, as popularly interpreted even by distinguished educators, has been a serious handicap. It was a clever writer who said with more than a grain of truth, "Give a psychologist a rat and a graph, and you will get about the last word on the subject of philosophy of education in the machine age." The nervous reactions of a rat are interesting and suggestive, but if we build our educational philosophy upon these reactions, we may reasonably expect some of our students to act like rats. Eliminate from education the belief in such permanent ideals as honesty, purity, unselfishness, and you will produce a generation living on a level with the beast, and the morals of the race will become the "morals of the barnyard." Fortunately the currents of thought are changing and this philosophy is outmoded in science, fiction and education, but we are living in the backwash produced by these currents. We have sowed the wind and are reaping the whirlwind.

What did Jesus Christ offer to the world in this Sermon on the Mount, this constitution of the kingdom of God? Primarily the leaven of a new type of citizen. This type may always be in the minority, but minorities have been in history very powerful. The citizens are described in the passage which we call the Beatitudes. Verses three to eleven of the fifth chapter of the Gospel according to Saint Matthew begin with the word "blessed." The Greek word in the original text may also be translated "happy." "Happy are the poor in spirit," "Happy are they that mourn." The late Percy Ainsworth in his very stimulating book of sermons on the Beatitudes, gave as the title of his book, "The Secret of Happiness." The verses have often been



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treated as intended by Jesus to be paradoxical for the sake of arousing interest in his hearers. But we will come nearer to understanding Jesus if we take them as literal. Jesus frequently used figures of speech and paradoxical statements, but in this case he was speaking literally and very plainly to those who would take the pains to search beneath the surface for the deeper meaning.

THE HEART OF THE BEATITUDES

It is not my wish to attempt to treat all of the Beatitudes, but simply to get at the heart of their meaning. Several of them deal with purifying and strengthening the thought life of the individual. "Thoughts are acts and may become deeds," said a learned judge as he sentenced the Haymarket rioters years ago. The entire Sermon on the Mount stresses this idea. Murderers are those who hate, adulterers are those with lust in their hearts. No wonder Jesus said, "Happy are the pure in heart," "Happy are the meek and the merciful," "Happy are the peace makers and they that hunger and thirst after righteousness." Goodspeed has translated the last clause, "Blessed are those who are hungry and thirsty for uprightness." The trouble with us today is that we do not yearn for uprightness intensely enough. We admire those who think justly and kindly, but we have no consuming passion to do so.

Reinhold Niebuhr in a recent article says, "Religion in its quintessential form is the yearning after the ideal which transcends any given situation." For this reason religion is radical as well as conservative. Its poetic content and faith, as well as its institutional expressions, make any great religion conservative, but its idealism will also make it radical. In Christianity both elements are conspicuous. Jesus was to his generation very much a radical, and Paul was the same. No more powerful revolutionary force has ever come into civilization than the life and teachings of Jesus. Complacency can have no place in the thoughts of "the terrible meek" or of those who are "hungry and thirsty for uprightness." How often we have misunderstood the virtue of meekness. It has nothing to do with submission and reticence. "Happy are the meek for they shall inherit the earth," said Jesus. "Nonsense," say the unthinking, "the meek will always be trampled upon." But actually the meek man is the only one who stands any chance of inheriting the earth, he is the only one who stands a chance of ever learning anything; the other men "know it all" at the outset.

AN IMPOSSIBLE STATEMENT

"Happy are those who mourn." Here indeed is an impossible statement! But "believe it or not," the statement is profoundly true if wisely interpreted. Sorrow in itself is no blessing. We make a mistake when we try to minimize the fact of suffering and the intensity of the pain which the human race experiences. Jesus was too sympathetic ever to belittle this. But in God's world sorrow has some compensations. It brings the proud and the carefree down on a level with their fellows so that they can understand each other. It also teaches a man to know how puny his own strength is when pitted against the greatest forces of the universe, teaches him his need of comfort and guidance from the Great Spirit back of this universe. In a world where cooperation on the part of human beings is prerequisite to any advance in civilization, whatever teaches men to work together has great values. We do no violence to this verse, and on the contrary bring out one of its many meanings, when we say, "Happy are those who have the capacity to mourn."

Here we come very close to the root of our social problem today. The aristocracy and the middle classes are accused, all too justly, of being callous to the suffering of the underprivileged. Plenty of reasons for this can be given, among them the fact that our machines and our form of industrial organization remove us from those who work for us. And millions upon millions of stock owners are employers of people whom they cannot see, and whose sufferings they cannot imagine. If there is no way of making the more fortunate conscious of their responsibility to the under-

privileged except by bloody revolution, then in time surely a revolution will come as it has periodically in history. But there are better ways. The aristocracy and the bourgeoisie are worthy of saving as well as the proletariat, but they cannot be saved at the expense of the proletariat.

A preacher told in my hearing recently how a woman once said to him in his youth, "O brother ——, what a great preacher you would make if God would only break your heart!" Not a few have called attention to what suffering has done for Franklin D. Roosevelt to make him feel the heart throbs of the common man.

Lincoln in all probability could not have become the greatest of all Americans had it not been for the hardships in his early days which made him sensitive to the feelings of all who suffered—rich or poor, slaves or free men, Confederates or Yankees. We need the injection of some powerful stimulant which will produce in each of the major classes of society ability to understand and feel with their fellows in other strata. Christianity at its birth and in some other periods has shown the ability to arouse such sympathy. Lewis Browne in his book, "Since Calvary," makes this sympathy for the poor the most outstanding trait of genius in Jesus of Nazareth. As he sees it, Christianity while it was winning its way to power was a religion of the underprivileged. It was more than this as everyone knows if he is familiar with the work of Justin, Clement, Origen, and other great teachers of the early centuries of the Christian era. But it was distinctly such a religion. Slaves were treated like "brothers" as Paul advises his friend Philemon. Even communism on a small scale was tried for a time in apostolic days, and though it did not long survive, the brotherly spirit of which it was an expression did survive and went far toward convincing Constantine that Christianity was too useful a way of life to be stamped out; that, on the contrary, it was worth adopting as a means of rejuvenating the ancient Roman empire.

"*THE JOY OF THE HARD WAY*"

"Happy are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake." Ainsworth called his sermon on this beatitude "The Joy of the Hard Way." The early Christians were conspicuous for their bravery. "The blood of the martyrs" became "the seed of the church," as one of their leaders boasted. Our own courage is often at low ebb, especially in a time of economic uncertainty. A courageous church would be a godsend to this age. One of the auspicious signs in this very period is the courage of the clergy in Germany who are protesting at the peril of losing their jobs against making the church a mere tool of the state. Readers of Dr. Charles MacFarland's book, "The New Church and the New Germany," noted with surprise that this careful student of present conditions closed his account with a note of hope for the future of the church in Germany because of the courage shown by so many ministers.

Is it possible to produce such citizens as those described in the Sermon on the Mount? The answer is that such have been produced in large numbers and therefore can be produced. Our gospel was first incarnated in Jesus; it must be reincarnated in us. Gipsy Smith once said in my hearing, "All nature is full of suppressed magnificence," and he illustrated the statement by calling attention to the buds and seeds in springtime. He followed this up by saying that all human nature is likewise full of suppressed magnificence which God will bring into bloom if given the chance.

We need a new faith in the possibility of producing heroic men and women. The human race cannot be as sordid, depraved and weak as our writers of morbid fiction would have us believe. That such people exist in large numbers no one can deny, but the finer heroic souls also exist by the multitude—humble in station, often, but men and women who live not for themselves but for others. An Indian nationalist speaking of Lord Irwin, the popular viceroy of India who retired in 1931, said, "It is because of such men that God lets the English live in India." Gandhi, Kagawa, Grenfell, Jane Addams, and a host of others could be cited. Admiral Byrd in his solitary ice-bound shelter is a hero of no mean proportions. Walter Reed and Noguchi were just as true to life as Arrowsmith; C. F. Andrews and Stanley Jones are more typical of actual clergymen than Elmer Gantry.

Christlike men and women are the saving element in our civilization and they are worthy to be called "sons of your Father who is in heaven." Of such we could say as Pompilia said of Caponsacchi:

> Through such souls alone
> God stooping, shows sufficient of his light
> For us i' the dark to rise by.
> And I rise.

The early Christians, citizens of the kingdom of God, amazed the Roman empire. Their successors, whenever true to their leader, are still accomplishing wonders around the world.

Liberty and Equality

By Clyde McGee

THE year that began on the fourth day of March, 1933, will be looked back upon, I believe, as marking the beginning of a new era in the history of our republic. A crisis had been reached. And under the new leadership that had come to power the nation with high and conscious purpose turned its face in a new direction.

The years of depression had robbed us, as a people, of illusions born of prosperous days. The assumptions of our comfortable optimisms had crumbled before the forces that threatened our entire system with collapse. The terrible necessities we faced in a world bereft of its old securities begot in us a more realistic mood. We began to rethink our whole manner of living. We asked of life itself what it was all about. What was the purpose of our toil? How could a good life be realized? What were the conditions of happiness? What was business for? What was government for? And what was the relation of business and government to valid objects of desire?

We felt compelled to free ourselves of the sense of frustration and defeat that was imperiling our spirits. We must find more significant goals. We must perfect more effective instruments to realize our aims. And as event followed hard upon event, and as democratic forms of government were brought to an end in country after country, we were obliged to seek a faith and a hope that would save us from pessimism and despair. So, this morning, I beg the privilege of trying to envisage with you the outlines of the situation in which we find ourselves, and to recall those principles deep rooted in our historic past that give ground for hope and that furnish light and guidance for our way. These principles are not obscure. They are clear and simple and near at hand. We need but the courage of our fathers who in a day dark and deeply beset with difficulty declared, as we too must declare: "We believe in liberty! We believe in equality!" And we need their steadfastness of purpose to interpret their meaning anew, to lay them well to heart and to go forward in constructive endeavor in high obedience to their unequivocal demands.

CLYDE MCGEE

We believe in liberty. This faith is written into all the records of our past. It is a part of our faith as men. It is the acknowledgment of the claim that life makes upon life—its right to expand and develop and to realize a fulness of being. We believe in liberty—a God given thing, a hunger of man's spirit, a necessity of his nature as man. Historians date the beginning of our modern era from the occasion of that significant outburst of the spirit of freedom that marked the Renaissance and the Reformation; from the day when man accepted the challenge Jesus laid down to the men of his time, "Why do ye not of yourselves judge what is right?" This the men of the Reformation did. They claimed free access of the soul to God. The soul of man and the soul of God! And free commerce between them! With no need of an intermediary, whether of holy church or of sacred priesthood.

Everywhere man has borne his witness to this faith. For it he has lived on crusts and water, suffered in exile, languished in dungeons, burned at the stake, died on the gibbet, refusing the surrender of his soul's claim to freedom. He claimed the right to read the Bible for himself, to interpret its meaning in the light of his own understanding, and to find in the depths of his own heart that Word of high command which he must obey. For this he crossed the seas and laid on these strange shores the foundations of a new nation, "a nation conceived in liberty." And this faith from the very first has been built into the structure of our American life. Through the years millions from other lands have turned to these shores that they might share in the heritage of a liberty loving people. We believe in liberty! For without it man cannot grow in moral structure; nor can his life take on dignity, meaning and worth.

LIBERTY A GIFT OF GOD

And we believe in equality. This, too, has been our faith from the beginning: "All men are created equal." Lincoln was right, we believe, in his interpretation of what the fathers meant. "They did not intend to declare all men equal in all respects. They did not mean to say that all were equal in color, size, intellect, moral development or social capacity. They defined with tolerable clearness in what respects they did consider all men created equal—equal with certain inalienable rights among which are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." This shows what democracy means—all are to share as largely as possible in the best life. It roots itself in one of the deepest convictions of man's soul, that every man should have a chance to show the kind of stuff that is in him. It is woven into our past as inextricably as our faith in liberty. "In his right to eat the bread his own hand has earned," said Lincoln of the Negro, "he is my equal and the equal of every other living man." Give up that and democratic faith is done for. Every man shall stand equal before the law. God is no respecter of persons.

Our creed as citizens and our Christian profession alike proclaim our common faith in equality. "God created man in his own image." "We are his offspring." "God made of one every nation of men." "Men are equal." Jew, Greek and ancient Roman bear common witness to a common faith—faith in equality. All high friendship demands its fullest recognition. Any wholesome comradeship forbids any thought of superiority or inferiority. And wherever men meet on any other than common ground, tension and strife soon appear. The first principle of justice insists upon it—equality before the law. Religion in its higher forms has always affirmed it; the equality of all men before a common Father. Its insistence but voices a claim that life itself makes upon life. It is as necessary as liberty itself for life's growth and fulfillment. This, then, is the faith

of the fathers. And this is the faith of their sons: "We believe in liberty; we believe in equality."

LIBERTY WITH EQUALITY

But now our problem begins to take shape. How can these two be kept together—these two that God hath joined, but by man have been put asunder! How are they to be reunited? What instruments are to be devised, what disciplines shall be needed to restore their union? For men have caused to be enemies whom God intended to be friends. What highway shall be built whereon these two shall walk together, liberty with equality, and equality with liberty? Here where liberty has been undisciplined, casting off all restraint, anarchy and chaos reign. Elsewhere ruthless dictatorships have risen establishing equality by crushing out all liberty. To avoid these extremes, to move forward experimentally, adjusting on the basis of our ancient historic faith the claims of these two, constitute, in my judgment, the purpose and the spirit of "The New Deal."

How little have we realized what our undisciplined and ruthless individualism has done to this equality that we have all believed was as indispensable to the good life as liberty itself. We are lacking in imagination to sense the real significance of the appalling contrasts of wealth and poverty in this richest of all countries. There must be sufficient measure of equality, of "bargaining power," and of "purchasing power" to make a good life possible or our economic system thereby condemns itself.

Who of us can grasp the implications of such inequalities as these figures reveal: for the year 1929 ten persons reported an income of $89,000,000—an average of almost nine millions per year apiece. Forty one million other persons reported no income at all. According to published statements, 2,000 millionaires on Park Avenue in New York city in 1929 spent an average of $84,000 per year per family. One rich man possessed more money than a million of the families of the poor combined. Approximately 93 per cent of the receipts of federal income tax for 1929 came from three per cent of rich tax payers. In February 1933 forty per cent of the workers of the country were unemployed. But how many of those employed received a living wage? In a civilization of plenty, millions starving or kept alive by the hand of charity! What had become of "equality"—any effective claim upon the things that make a good life possible?

MAKING MAN AN ECONOMIC SLAVE

Lincoln said "the nation cannot endure half slave and half free." The man who is bereft of bargaining power, of purchasing power, becomes virtually a slave. And it is not enough that the slave shall be fed either by the master's charity or the government's dole. The only solution to be accepted must include the free exercise of that liberty and that equality without which the good life is impossible. This does not mean that some shall not have more wealth than others, but it does mean that no man shall be denied his claim to a chance to lead a self-respecting existence in equal rights with his fellows. The New Deal speaks of this as redistributing the national income—but that is simply saying in other words that we freely acknowledge all men's claims to equality.

But in denying equality to men we rob them of their freedom also. When the possession of the instruments of the good life are in the hands only of those on one side of the table, where opposing interests meet, then those on the other side of the table are deprived not alone of their equality but of their freedom as well. But that is hardly true. Some choice is left these underprivileged ones. They are free to be slaves, free to starve as wastrels if they will. Or they are free to strike back, as men long denied their rights must always do. For those same hands whose strength has built our cities can tear them down again. The instruments of destruction are within their reach. And when the day of justice is too long delayed, violence appears. There is no need of closing our eyes to these bitter realities which the pages of history make so plain that he who runs may read. Surely we should not be unmindful of this while the spirit of revolt is growing in the hearts of peoples in all countries—a spirit of revolt in the hearts of people who have been patient, patient beyond understanding, through years in which we have blindly drifted toward disaster.

HOW SECURE EQUALITY?

And when liberty, undisciplined and unsubjected to social control and direction, drives out or destroys equality it also destroys itself. It degenerates into chaos and anarchy. This redistribution of the national income, this reestablishment of equality to the same level with liberty, is demanded not alone for the sake of social justice as the reformer might argue; not alone to protect national health, as the social worker might insist. It is needed to make possible the orderly functioning of this vast, complicated and interrelated industrial society. For, waiving for the moment the claim of social justice, and the plea of the social worker, we still are left with this all important consideration. Where a fair measure of equality is denied the masses—that is, when they lack purchasing power—they cannot pay the merchant for his goods; and if the merchant cannot sell then neither can he buy. The factories must close; and when their wheels are stopped the workers are not paid; and workers with no wages cannot buy the merchants' goods; and when the end of this vicious spiral is reached, then comes collapse. What real freedom then has the producer or manufacturer either to buy or to sell? What freedom then is left the worker? Freedom, without a proportionate equality, brings ruin upon both.

But there is a way, indeed more than one way, to secure equality. Lycurgus in ancient Sparta found a way. He divided up the land among the people. When the grain had been gathered from the newly divided fields and he saw the shocks standing equal and alike, he smiled and said: "All Laconia looks like one family estate divided among brothers." In Sparta there were no rich, no poor, no gold nor silver. Iron money alone was used. The dealers in luxuries were forbidden to exist. The people were made to sit at a common table and to eat the same food. And the children at the age of seven were taken from their homes and turned over to the state. Yes, Sparta had equality—equality, but no freedom.

Russia today will have equality, through a proletariat dictatorship. And it may be that some day we too may take the road of Russia. Not because we want to, but because in our blindness and our smug complacency we did not know the hour of our visitation. And there is the way the mad Hitler is taking—the road of the totalitarian state, crushing out all distinctions of parties and persons, bending all to one ruthless will. And we may venture that road some day—not because we want to, but because, having refused action in the day when deliberate and reasonable action could be taken, we shall be caught in the storm and will turn to fascism to save us from chaos and anarchy.

THE NEW CHALLENGE

But these ways are not our ways. They are not native to our soil. They have no root in our past, though, to be sure, their seed planted here may spring up and grow. It is for ourselves to find a way, seeking it first by reasoned experiment within the framework of the existing system. We must make new interpretation of and renew our faith in liberty and equality. We must keep the real issue in the forefront of attention: where there is no fair measure of equality there can be no final freedom for any. And equality without freedom is a form of slavery.

What, then, is left for us to do?

We must discipline our spirits and socialize our wills. We must readily acknowledge that no small demands are laid upon us. For any man or any group of men to seek personal gain or party advantage in such an hour as this, is to play a traitor's part. And the newspapers that endeavor by subtle and cunning methods of news distortion or suppression or by crafty misrepresentation of public acts or measures to break down the confidence of the people, and to poison their minds with fear and distrust, and so sabotage the processes of recovery, should be shown no mercy at the hands of public opinion. And those selfish groups which outwardly support but secretly obstruct the methods of valid experiment are proving themselves the basest of public enemies. And these folk who in their clubs chirp and chatter their fears and suspicions of action that has boldness and courage in it are to be given that measure of attention that empty words deserve. Their counselings are vain.

A CALL FOR COURAGE

The hour for meticulous dispute and partisan debate has long gone by. We must practice the highmindedness the greatness of the occasion demands; we must meet with answerable courage a situation that challenges us in these vital years—a situation whose ultimate issue as yet no man can see.

But we must have faith to break from old traditions, to explore untrodden ground, to keep confidence in the ultimate justice of the people. We must patiently enlarge our knowledge of the larger problem, broaden our understanding, expand our sympathies, and, gaining wisdom from failure and learning from success, move steadfastly forward until liberty shall be established with equality and equality made the strong support of liberty.

The Word of God Is Not Bound

By Dwight Bradley

But the word of God is not bound. II Timothy 2:9.

WHEN, on a certain occasion, Gilbert Chesterton was asked why he had not become a socialist, he replied in some such words as these: "It is because I suffer sufficiently under the tyranny of things as they are. As things are, when I grow weary of the tyranny of Jones, I can turn to Robinson and let him lord it over me for a while. Tiring of Robinson I can turn to Smith. And so on. But under socialism, when I tired of Jones and turned to Robinson, I should find that my tyrant was still Jones; and when in desperation I turned to be tyrannized over by Smith, I should find again that Jones was also there. And so it would continue ad nauseam. I, for myself, therefore, prefer a variety of tyrants to one single and ubiquitous tyranny. That is why I am not a socialist."

Whether or not we agree with Mr. Chesterton in his whimsical estimate of socialism, we may well find ourselves in agreement with his thesis: which is that the living of life involves and implies the necessity of accepting with as good grace as possible the conditions of an inescapable servitude. Such is, indeed, the most obvious fact of our experience.

Like the children of Israel in Egypt, we are born into bondage; and like them we cry out vainly for deliverance. There is no Moses to lead us across the wilderness into a promised land: or, if there be a Moses, we wait long for his coming.

Consider, if you will, the extent and power of those things that hold us in chains.

CONDITIONS THAT BIND

Endowed at birth with a set of hereditary desires and capacities, we are sentenced to live throughout all our days under the constraint of those desires and under the limitation of those capacities. We may, in hours of illuminated insight, sing with Tennyson:

> O yet we trust that somehow good
> Will be the final goal of ill,
> To pangs of nature, sins of will,
> Defects of doubt, and taints of blood;

but even so, with him we perforce must continue in less confident strain:

> So runs my dream, but what am I?
> An infant crying in the night:
> An infant crying for the light:
> And with no language but a cry!

We can never break through the conditions arbitrarily set for our development; and to believe that we can is merely to delude ourselves into attempting that which lies outside our powers.

Again, we are born into an environment, both natural and social, which holds us in close custody. The influence of climate and geography, of racial strains and of economic status, is determinative throughout the entire span of life. Babies born in the tropics of parents who

belong to tropical races are by that circumstance forced into a typical racial mold with typical physical traits, from which they can extricate themselves only by doing violence to their inmost nature. Just so is it with men of northern stock who try to live in the tropics. Adjustment in each case is difficult; and even when apparently successful, is actually artificial. Moreover, the physical and psychological effects of undernourishment and poverty, in the earlier years, are manifest during all the years to come, even though wealth and well-being have been won meanwhile in the struggle for survival against economic odds.

CREATURES OF OUR OWN TIME

Again, we are bound by the time in which we live. A man of the twentieth century cannot dwell (save only in imagination) in any other period. From such an observation it follows that a man of the twentieth century must needs accept the conditions that prevail during his lifetime. He may wish that he had been born in some previous epoch, or that his birthday had been delayed a few generations; but his wish, like Hamlet's, is powerless to alter the day and hour at which he came upon the earthly scene. Spengler, in closing his monumental work "The Decline of the West," lays down the law on this point with grim finality.

"For us," he says, "whom a Destiny has placed in this culture and at this moment of its development—our direction, willed and obligatory at once, is set for us within narrow limits, and on any other terms life is not worth the living. We have not the freedom to reach to this or to that, but the freedom to do the necessary or to do nothing. And a task that historical necessity has set *will* be accomplished with the individual or against him."

There is implied herein a rigidity of movement in events that we may well regard as being rather less stiff than Spengler allows; but even so, a candid facing of facts will drive home upon us the essential truth thus harshly set forth.

THE TOILS OF CIRCUMSTANCE

Again, we are limited by the very structure of our bodies and the restraints imposed by space as well as time. How many of us are there who have not cried out more than once with Paul the apostle, "Who shall deliver me from the bondage of this death?" Ah yes, we may go on with him and say, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord"; yet with him also we must go still farther and say, "So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin." Whatever may be our opinion as to what Paul meant by "the law of sin," we know out of experience that our bodies perforce obey laws which our souls reach out to transcend.

Furthermore, too, our very spirits hold us in, and our thoughts become a ball and chain. The widest and clearest consciousness that we have of reality serves in our moments of higher aspiration rather to make us restless within the prison walls of our ignorance than to liberate and send us forth into the open, where we may feel ourselves to be free. To the man who really thinks, as well as to the one who really feels, thought and feeling are scarcely more than windows in a dungeon through which to look, if haply he may see a narrow bit of the beautiful world that lies outside.

Finally, there are those special kinds of bondage that fall upon us individually: such as sickness, moodiness, temperamental disabilities, lack of adequate skill, peculiarities of disposition, particular handicaps of dullness, immaturity and ineptitude. Besides, we find ourselves enmeshed on occasion in the toils of such circumstance as Paul found himself caught in when he wrote the letter to Timothy, which furnishes us our text: the toils, that is, of a secular society or state against whose commands, as men of conscience, we must set ourselves in order to keep our self-respect and serve our God.

COMING TO GRIPS WITH REALITY

So, it is no academic problem that we must ponder as we give thought to the bondage which restrains us as we make our way through these human years. If there be any virtue in the newly and persistently sounded call by men like Reinhold Niebuhr, to forsake our romantic dreaming and come to grips with reality, that virtue lies in the certainty that an honest facing of the realities in any given situation is the first step toward a discovery of other realities which may help to mitigate or to overcome the evils resident therein.

It is significant in this regard that in writing to Timothy, the apostle refers, with keen appreciation, to the fact that an obscure friend named Onesiphorous "was not ashamed of my chain"; and that he urges Timothy also to resist the natural tendency of a youthfully conventional mind to be embarrassed by his spiritual father's predicament. And, it is noteworthy that in the line from which our text is taken, Paul returns again to the subject so heavy on his mind, speaking of "my gospel; wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, even unto bonds." Imprisonment and chains were a stark reality to this man: he might, however, have tried to ignore them or pretend that they made no ponderable difference to him. There is a kind of sentimental religious romanticist (from whom God deliver us) who would certainly have done so had he found himself in a like situation. But Paul, being essentially a realist, and seeking to discover the solution of his problem in the realm of reality rather than of make-believe, accepted his bondage forthrightly, made no effect to deprecate it or explain it away; but, rather, in a moment of magnificent faith and comprehension wrote down on his parchment the line that provides the key for a solution of every problem, and release for every captive spirit in the universe: He wrote: "But the word of God is not bound."

WHAT IS THE WORD OF GOD?

What now do we suppose that Paul meant by "the word of God"? Not, we may be assured, some anthropomorphic or figurative conception of a divinely articulated sentiment, opinion or command! Not what a certain type of watered-down and academic liberalism might call "the intelligent and intelligible manifestation of orderly process in the universe." Not merely, either, an inward sense of spiritual guidance, which may

be and so easily is degraded to the level of sentimentality, and so comfortably rationalized into a belief in supernatural justification for following every personal whim. Nor did Paul mean the letter of Hebrew scriptures when he thought of "the word of God."

What Paul meant, no doubt, is correctly put by the author of the epistle to the Hebrews when he says: "For the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than a two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and

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opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do."

It is the "word of God" in such a sense that Paul meant when out of his bondage he cried, "But the word of God is not bound." And I doubt not, moreover, that the apostle's conception was very near to that of the writer of the Apocalypse as set forth in the following powerful description: "And I saw heaven opened, and beheld a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped with blood: and his name is called The Word of God."

THE WORD OF GOD IN OUR TIME

How, then, in a more contemporary idiom shall we try to declare what we mean by the "Word of God," assuming that its meaning to us is the same that it was to Paul?

We may, if we please, resort to the method of dialectic with Karl Barth and by a series of affirmations and denials build up an impression for which admittedly we have no adequately definitive words. This, however, is not necessary. For we are equipped to state in terms of direct simplicity that the Word of God as Paul conceived it and as it was conceived by the authors of Hebrews and Revelation, and as Barth conceives it, is nothing more nor less than the whole vast cosmic pulse and rhythm which is felt in every atom of matter, every blade of grass, every organ of life, every pause of thought and contemplation, every surge of emotion, every act of animal or man, every movement of history, and every moment of spiritual illumination. Like the sun, "his going forth is from the ends of the heavens, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof."

THE ABSOLUTE GOODNESS OF GOD

In so far, that is, as we are capable of conceiving the universal or cosmic, to that extent are we able to conceive of the Word of God. But by the very reason of our inability to conceive of the Word of God in its fulness, its boundlessness, by that token we are able to realize with Paul that the "Word of God is not bound": not bound even by our capacity to enclose it in a concept. Stand a moment, if you will, before that statement in the Gospel of John: "The light shineth in darkness and the darkness comprehended it not." Take note that the light shone in darkness. To a certain extent, indeed, the shadow was lifted. To a certain extent a radiance penetrated the gloom. But only to a certain extent was this so. The darkness was pierced by a ray, but still the darkness prevailed. It could not (to translate the Greek word literally)—it could not "receive fully" that which was made manifest in its midst. This light was the Word of God coming into the world. But the world, while it could see the light, and even in a pitifully fumbling way could appreciate and enjoy the light, was utterly unable to realize what it was in truth that had come!

This it is that Paul meant when he wrote to Timothy from prison that "the Word of God is not bound."

He meant the inconceivable greatness and power of God. He meant the absolute goodness of God. He meant the suffering and redeeming grace of God. He meant the all-embracing love of God. He meant the greatness, goodness, grace and love of God all working together on a universal scale in a functional relationship with mankind toward the establishment of God's rule and kingdom on the earth. He meant the revelation of God in history and scripture. And, because of his vision on the Damascus road, he meant Jesus Christ ("Jesus whom thou persecutest"), the eternal Word of God made flesh, of whom he could profoundly say, "I no longer live but Christ liveth in me."

It was because he meant all this and more (far more than words could tell), that Paul was able to write from his bondage, "But the Word of God is not bound."

What, then, may it mean to us? What may it mean to us, we who live in this twentieth century—we latter day Christians—we professional clergymen who minister to the churches—we bondage-ridden men and

women who move now for our few years back and forth, up and down, here and there upon the earth? What may it mean to us in relation to the tyrannies under which we live and the limitations that circumscribe us and hem us in?

By and large, in the first place, it may mean a new attitude toward all the restraints imposed on us by heredity, environment, the times we live in, our physical handicaps, the restrictions of space, the inadequacy of thought, the frustration of desire, and those personal disabilities that are often the most exasperating of all.

We may learn—gradually perhaps, or it may be in a sudden flash of understanding—that our lives are all, and all in all, the manifestation in human aspect of the boundless Word of God. Such a realization, when it rises in consciousness, makes all the world new. Instead of being blind to ourselves as formerly we were in the darkness of lonely, helpless separation, we behold ourselves now in the light of universal meaning. In God's light we shall see light; and we shall learn how true it is that "the spirit of man is the candle of the Eternal."

GOD AND HUMAN NATURE

Once we have made this conviction our own, there dawns on us an hitherto unsuspected truth: namely, that all our desires, all our hopes, all our deeds, all our efforts to succeed and all our heartbreaking failures—all, *all* are the actual and concrete manifestation of a greatness, a goodness, a redemptive grace and a love that reaches down into our human nature and works through it for a purpose in which our destinies are involved and for the attainment of which we are imperatively needed.

What then may be the effect of such a discovery upon our practical conduct in the face of those limitations and tyrannies of which we are so poignantly aware? Having now received the understanding that enables us to take a new attitude toward our bondage, because we know that there is a boundlessness working in and through us—what may we do with our new attitude?

The answer is plain, and can be illustrated by reference to lives that have been lived under heavy chains and yet have so expressed the unbounded Word of God that their work is remembered not as that of prisoners, but as that of men who could command the freedom of the universe.

Here is the answer: *Whatever your bondage, let the boundless flow through you as the river flows through its channel to the sea.*

Fedor Dostoievski was an epileptic, a man who lived his entire life under the handicap of a disturbing temperament. He suffered excessively from self-consciousness and a feeling of inadequacy. He spent several years in Siberia, a political prisoner. But in him flowed the Word of God with power. No Russian has ever spoken to mankind as Dostoievski spoke in his great novels. He spent his years in bondage, but the Word of God was not bound. In "Crime and Punishment," "The Idiot" and "The Brothers Karamozov" God's Word through Dostoievski has helped to set the human spirit free.

Booker T. Washington, whom we are proud to name, came up from slavery. It would be impossible for any of us to imagine against what odds he had to contend. Yet on the North American continent there have been produced not more than a dozen men of his rank in judgment, moral power and leadership. Booker Washington was bound; but the Word of God that flowed through him was not bound. Through him it has helped to set men free.

Francis of Assisi grew up in luxury during a period of spiritual and moral anarchy. Under the impression that God desired use of him, he surrendered claim to fortune, abandoned luxury, and commenced a life of voluntary poverty for Christ's sake. If any man ever suffered under the bondage of his time, Francis did. "His direction," to quote Spengler's dictum once more, "was set for him within narrow limits." But within those narrow limits, set by the latter twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, the Word of God flowing through this man of no great natural genius, poured forth so deep and wide a stream of spiritual power that to this day mankind finds refreshments in its current!

Of Dante Alighieri, Charles Eliot Norton wrote: "The face (in his death-mask) is one of the most pathetic upon which human eye ever looked, for it exhibits in its expression the conflict between the idea of his life and its practical experience." This sensitive genius fought as a soldier in the wars and endured exile from his beloved city. Tradition tells us that he suffered all his adult life from an emotional frustration from which he won respite only by sublimation.

He dwelt in a prison—always looking out: yet, through the narrow window of mortality there came to him a vision which he embodied in the "Divine Comedy"—a work that has done as much to enfranchise man's mind and soul as any writing save only the Bible itself. Dante was bound; but the Word of God was not bound. The boundless Word of God wrought through Dante's bonds to liberate the spirit of mankind.

We need, I think, to cite no further examples. Let us return then to our answer: *Whatever your bondage, let the boundless flow through you as a river flows through its channel to the sea.*

THE BONDS OF THE MINISTRY

Specifically, what may this mean to us who are today engaged in the task of a Christian ministry?

It means that we realistically accept whatever bondage is ours to endure; and to accept it not as a bitter necessity but rather as a vitalizing challenge.

We are, or should be, particularly interested in the bearing of such an attitude upon the circumstance of having been set down as we are at this moment in the development of western culture. We need not explore the details of our situation in respect to the time at hand. We are sufficiently aware, I believe, of the perils, confusions and tensions as well as of the hopes, the ideals and the possibilities inherent in the present hour. We are ministers or members of Protestant Christian churches which willy-nilly must share in the life around them. What, then, may or can we do?

I do not propose to answer that question at this time by suggesting any special methods, techniques or programs. Rather, I would answer it by reminding you once more of Paul the apostle—he who called himself

an "ambassador in bonds"—as he sat writing to Timothy his young friend and protege. I would remind you of all that he had been taken through since his vision on the Damascus road—trials of scourging and stonings, imprisonment, and always the threat of death itself. I would remind you of what he suffered even at the hands of those from whom he had the right to expect friendship and loyalty.

And then, I would remind you of what he wrote in II Corinthians apropos of all this: "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body."

Here is found the secret of a bondage that can serve as a medium for the Boundless. The secret lies where all of us can discover it: namely, at the place where the greatness, goodness, redemption and love of God enter the weakness, wickedness, wastage and pettiness of our individual lives, to use them for purposes vaster than we can comprehend. This is the liberty wherewith Christ makes us free. This is release from "the entanglement of the yoke of bondage." This is escape from the tyranny of self, of circumstance, of events of time and space, of thought and feeling, and all things else that would hold us in. This is, indeed, the meaning, the hope and the glory of our ministry. We live, to be sure, under bondage; but the Word of God is not bound!

What Is It to Love God?

By Carl S. Patton

If a man say, I love God and hateth his neighbor, he is a liar. I John 4:20.

I AM bound to say I think this statement of the apostle is altogether too strong. It is not proper to call a man a liar to his face. Even if he is one it is generally better not to say so in these words. They have an ugly sound and usually indicate that the man who says them is not in a pleasant state of mind. To call a man a liar is to admit that you are mad yourself and to make him mad also. So it is not a good thing to do. It has been done many times before now, but I believe the good results from it have always been disappointing.

A man may be a liar, of course. Most of us have been liars at times, I suppose. It is hard to live for sixty or seventy years and always to have told the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. And if we are liars, I would not deny that in rare and extreme cases some good may come from our being told so. A friend of mine of rather fiery temper seems to have got some good from it. He once knocked another man down in court for calling him a liar. Referring to it twenty years afterwards he said to me: "If anyone calls me a liar now, instead of knocking him down I stop and think whether there may be some truth in it." But I don't suppose this man, even now, likes being called a liar. Nor am I sure, in spite of what he said, that it would be entirely safe to call him a liar even yet, at least in public.

NOT MANY PEOPLE ARE LIARS!

But if it is not good to call a man a liar to his face, neither is it good to tell other people behind his back that he is one. If he is, it is better to let other people find it out for themselves. And he may not be one. The probability, in fact, is against it. Not many people are liars. I have known very few. Oh, I have known some men who under stress of excitement or upon return from a hunting or fishing trip, would stretch or color the truth just a little. Still more perhaps who would get themselves out of a tight place, or shield someone else, by a misstatement which they thought could do nobody any harm. But I don't call such people liars. Of genuine, habitual, honest-to-God liars I have known very few. Make a note of it: nine times out of ten when you think a man is a liar, you are mistaken. Something he said has been twisted, or it has grown beyond recognition in the telling. Or he did not mean by it what somebody took him to mean. Human capacity for misunderstanding is beyond calculation. Few people can remember accurately or tell anything exactly as they saw or heard it. If you want to be a gentleman and a Christian, when you hear something that leads you to suspect the truthfulness of any person, exhaust every other alternative before you decide that he is a liar. To do otherwise shows your ignorance of the complexities of human nature. No, people have poor judgment who are always jumping to the conclusion that someone is a liar.

After this long exordium on liars, for whom as a class I have no great respect but much sympathy, I come back to John and what he said: If a man say "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar. It is too strong. There are a good many quarrels and misunderstandings in the world, and they result in some hatreds, even among people who love God. During the war, the Germans hated the French and the French the Germans. Didn't either the French or the Germans love God? That would certainly surprise them very much, for they thought they did. In a fit of anger, perhaps quite justified, a man may temporarily hate someone. He may not wish to kill him, but he would not do him a good turn if he had a chance, and he would be glad if somebody else would do him a bad one. But he does not on that account hate his stenographer, or his doctor, or even his competitor, to say nothing of his wife and family. Why should anyone suppose that he hates God?

WHAT DOES LOVING GOD MEAN?

Which brings up the question, what is it to love God? If I ask you, as Father Serra asks the Indian in the mission play, "Do you love God?" and you answer, as the Indian does, "Yes, father, I do love God," what do you mean by that? What do we mean by God and how do we think of him that we should or can love him?

For practical purposes it is enough to say that we think of God as the source and the sum of all good.

We do not love him for his power; there is nothing lovable about that. We do not love him because he is the creator of the world, or the soul of the universe, or anything else like that. But we believe two things: first, that there is goodness in the world; it comes to us all the time. From people, from our dearly beloved and our close friends, from strangers who are considerate of us, from chance acquaintances who say a pleasant word, from artists who describe or interpret the world for us, and thinkers who dig out and exhibit the truth, from the beauty that we see and the reality that we discover; out of the blue sky and the round ocean and the living air it comes to us. We are not always conscious of it. But sometimes it comes to us with an almost overwhelming force. We seem to ourselves to be centers into whom from every point on the circumference the rays of blessing flow in. We see patient people plodding along, accepting what comes to them without bitterness or complaint; folks wearing their old clothes and living on half rations to be able to support some noble cause; heroes despising their own safety; men careless of fame or money and women sacrificing everything for love; truth and goodness and beauty, plenty of them in the world. That's the first thing.

And the second thing is this: all this truth and goodness and beauty we think of as somehow having its source in God, and of God as the sum of all the forces that work for good, and of all the good that has been attained. The evil in the world we charge to some other account; to accident, or the weakness and imperfections of human nature, to faulty arrangements of society; even to the devil, if we still believe in him. Or we may say we do not know where it comes from, only we never think of it as coming from God. God represents to us all the good in nature and in human life, the manifold and variegated and accumulated good of the world.

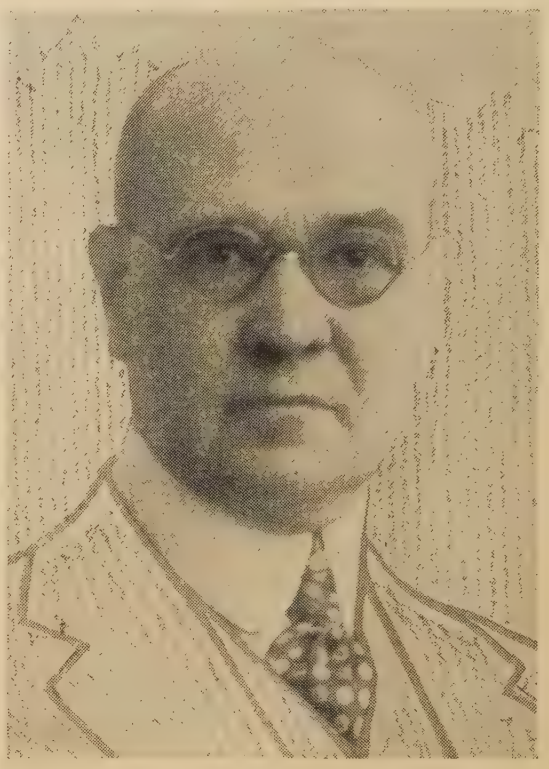
LOVING TRUTH IS LOVING GOD

It is obvious, therefore, that the love of God may take various forms, and may manifest itself in different ways as people differ from one another. The thinker loves the truth. And when he truly loves it, seeks it not for the fame or honor it may bring him, and defends it not from conceit or contentiousness, but just because it seems to him a supreme good which he must seek and guard at any cost—what is this love of the truth but the love of God? The artist loves beauty; and when he loves it truly and seeks it with his whole heart, never selling his soul for praise, or turning aside from the best because it is not appreciated, but counts all personal gain that comes to him as nothing and less than nothing, compared with the pursuit of the beauty which his soul seeks—what again is this love of beauty but the love of God?

But truth and beauty are after all more or less abstract. People make up the world. The real human value is goodness. When, therefore, a man says to himself, "I will be good; I will not lie; I will not hate; I will never be sore or sour; I will forgive; I will be patient; I will take what comes to me without bitterness and without grumbling; I will seek the good and the highest and best good; I will love every kind of goodness, and I will be good myself"—when he does this, and keeps after it, and brings himself back to it whenever he finds himself falling away from it—what, again, is this love of and pursuit after goodness, but a searching for and a loving of God?

CYNICISM IS DENIAL OF GOD

And because we are all human, and human good is what we seek; and because the real value of life, while it is heightened by art and deepened by the discovery of truth, nevertheless hangs mostly upon kindness, understanding and love, therefore, we do judge of a man's love of God chiefly, and rightly, by his love of his fellows. I do not say that God is exhausted in the world of human beings. There may be some vast region where



Carl S. Patton

God lives, off somewhere all by himself. But if there is, we can know nothing about it and it is nothing to us.

So I came back to the statement of John, and barring the slight exaggeration in it, I say it gets to the heart of the matter. All love of anyone is, in so far, a love of God. All hatred of anyone, is, in so far, a denial of God. And herein I find both a warning and a comfort for all of us. We are frail and fallible creatures, often twisted in our ideas, and not always masters as we would like to be of our own emotions and affections. Perhaps we cannot love God wholly. Certainly not as he deserves to be loved. But the warning is this: the one great obstacle to the love of God is neither passion nor weakness, nor is it an occasional flaring up of temper nor the tendency we all have to go here and there astray. It is hatred, cynicism, the refusal to see and love the good in others. It is the ignoring of human need and sorrow, the practical despising of humanity, the habitual set of the mind away from love. Watch out for that.

And if you say you love God, but this bad mind rules in you, then I will not say, as John did, that you are a liar. But I will say, either that you are confused and do not know what you mean by loving God, or else that the God you love, in spite of your evil mind, is a mere abstraction, and not worth loving. That is the warning.

But the comforting fact is this: God seems far away sometimes. We wonder about him, and are often confused. We say, as Job did, "O that I knew where I might find him!" He is beyond us; too much for us. Then we come back to another and a more hopeful saying of John's: "God is love and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God and God in him."

Our salvation, if we are followers of Jesus is to seek not even the good of our own souls, alone, but mercy and peace and blessedness for all.

> Who seeks for heaven alone to save his soul,
> May keep the path, but will not reach the goal;
> While he who walks in love may wander far,
> But God will bring him where the Blessed are.

The Aristocracy of Decency

By Clarence A. Spaulding

So did not I because of the fear of the Lord. Nehemiah 5: 15.

BOTH of these words, aristocracy and decency, have been passing through a prolonged period of depression. They are now seemingly fairly well deflated. Along with prohibition, puritanism and the Victorian era it has been generally conceded that the moral aristocrat is now to be derided. Rotarian democracy and moral Babbitry have no place for him. The successful exploitation of sex, the arrogance of vulgarity, the popularity of the lewd and lascivious, the triumph of the criminal element in the jazz age has muzzled, if not completely muffled the would-be defenders of decency. They have been completely swept aside by the flood of loosed inhibitions and the familiar plea that "everybody's doing it."

We have not arrived at this undesirable condition in moral affairs as a result of some sudden break in the market values of our moral and ethical ideals, akin to the October '29 break in the speculative market. Not at all. We are where we are as a result of the steady and persistent propagation of a perverted philosophy of life, whose fundamental tenet is that morality is a relative matter; that there is no source of divine authority which sanctions this or that conduct; that morality is a matter of individual taste, like fashions. If you like or approve a moral custom or commandment, observe it; if not, forget it. God does not enter into the picture at all since morality is not rooted in religion but in human ingenuity.

The genesis of this philosophy, so far as we have written records, dates back to the Sophists of ancient Greece. It is found cropping up in the days of the Renaissance in writers like Montaigne. Its modern appearance is credited to John Locke. In his "Human Understanding," he has collected a sample of "mores" from numerous and various groups and shows how they differ from each other. His conclusion is that there is "no limit to variations in moral standards and no agreement in the conscience of mankind."

This philosophical deduction, augmented by the vogue of relativity in science and the breakdown of authority in religion, has resulted in the moral debacle in which we now find ourselves.

A century ago the poet Wordsworth wrote:

> Milton! thou shouldst be living at this hour:
> England hath need of thee: she is a fen
> Of stagnant waters: altar, sword, and pen,
> Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower,
> Have forfeited their ancient English dower
> Of inward happiness. We are selfish men:
> O! raise us up, return to us again;
> And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power.
> Thy soul was like a Star, and dwelt apart:
> Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea,
> Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free;
> So didst thou travel on life's common way
> In cheerful godliness; and yet thy heart
> The lowliest duties on herself did lay.

However much Milton was needed in Wordsworth's day, no one doubts that his voice would be welcomed today. We find ourselves at a low ebb morally. The aftermath of the World War left us with depleted spiritual resources. The vulgarities of the present do not need cataloguing. Indecency stalks abroad to popular acclaim. The foundations of the moral order are not only questioned but openly defied; indulgence is a virtue; sin a figment of a morbid imagination. What is needed is a revival of decency. What is wanted is a moral aristocracy.

A NEW TREND TOWARD DECENCY

The Legion of Decency advocated by the Roman Catholic church may well be indicative of the way the wind is blowing. "It is a cloud the size of a man's hand." The Legion of Decency pledges the signer to the use of moral discrimination in the choice of motion pictures. The signer further pledges to use his influence to enlist others and to protest against the exploitation of sex and vice in every form.

The immediate effect of such a movement will be felt in the motion picture industry and it is primarily against Hollywood that the crusade is launched, for the motion picture has been the most serious offender against public decency in the past decade. To the plea of educators, welfare workers, parent-teacher associations and spiritual leaders alike, the magnates of this industry have manifested a peculiar insincerity. "Their words and promises of reform have meant nothing," to quote Father Lord, of the National Catholic Welfare conference, and self-confessed writer of the motion picture code. Father Lord now acknowledges that he has lost all confidence in the picture men themselves to clean up from within. The only self-respecting action left to those with any sense of decency is to protest through the organization of a Legion of Decency that will set

up its own unofficial censorship and establish a boycott against offending productions.

Hundreds of thousands of individuals have already enrolled, and the effect upon Hollywood via the box office has been marked. Pious promises have again been made with one hand while with the other contributions have been made by motion picture barons to a $2,000,000 fund to fight the boycott. Radio broadcasters are already sobbing out appeals to the public to "go slow;" "don't destroy this fifth great industry in the U.S.A.;" "don't put this stumbling block in the way of recovery;" "don't throw people out of employment;" "give us time," and so forth, and so forth.

However successful the Legion of Decency may be in its endeavor to elevate the moral tone of the movies, it will be tragic if it is content to let its influence stop there. The time is ripe for a revival of decency and the attending virtues all along the moral frontier. It is upon this point we need today to lay renewed emphasis.

"Even in the degenerate days of chivalry," writes a newspaper columnist, "a king could report defeat with the cheerful assurance that all has been lost save honor. Historians of the period through which we have been stumbling, called with some irony 'A Century of Progress,' may well record that all was gained save honor. Amateur Cassandras are fond of proclaiming that capitalism has collapsed. What has collapsed is the moral fabric of individuals. The boom and the depression were important not so much for what they did to our economic system as for what they did to personal integrity."

Writing in much the same vein, Dean Gauss in his "Primer for Tomorrow" says: "The fall of Greece took place not through any uprising in the east, but was the result of personal disintegration of character. The very element of strength in our civilization, our liberalism and tolerance that helped in this era have betrayed us. Our very strength has become our weakness. We have become so broad we have no convictions. From modern man's business practice and economic theory the individual and his conscience have largely disappeared."

It is this conscience that an aristocracy of decency must arouse. It is these lost spiritual values that it must restore.

MORAL ARISTOCRATS OF HISTORY

It might be well to ask at this point who were the moral aristocrats of bygone generations.

The history of the moral world affords few more interesting personages than Nehemiah. Nehemiah was a moral aristocrat. He was not only a man of the hour but a man with character sufficient to match the hour. He was in marked contrast to a modern religious leader, who was described recently as a "man whose talents far exceeded his character to use them." Nehemiah was a conspicuous example of a man whose character matched his talents. What a picture he presents as he stands before his people at a time of moral crisis, and declares, "So did not I because of the fear of the Lord."

It is to this inner integrity, this sense of "oughtness" dormant now in some lives, that appeal must be made. To those who would divorce morality from religion we must press the question: Whence then comes this sense of "oughtness"? Whence comes the moral imperative, "I must"? What makes Nehemiah and others like him say, "So did not I because of the fear of the Lord"? Whence comes this universal sense of right found in all races of men? And by "sense of right" we mean pursuing that line of action which results in the greatest good to the greatest number? It is rooted in the race itself, it is evidence of the divine alliance of God and man. It is the sure foundation for a moral aristocracy of decency.

Daniel was a moral aristocrat. At a crucial time in

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his life as a youth, an important decision was to be made. And "he purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the meat which came from the king's table."

The Quakers were, and are, moral aristocrats. A traveler in London, describing his experiences upon his return from a sightseeing trip, said he had seen a Quaker swimming in the Thames. To the credulous question, "How do you know he was a Quaker"? he replied, "Because he was swimming against the current." By this we do not mean to laud contrariness, but rather to exalt that quality of life so patent in the Quaker; that quality of moral discrimination and inner courage enabling him to turn from the popular path in obedience to an inner voice and swim, if need be, against the current.

THE PURITANS

The Puritans were moral aristocrats. This estimate, of course, does not square with the popular conception. In the popular mind the Puritan is long-faced, long-

haired, a kill-joy, walking about with a Bible under his arm, censorious, pious, praying on Sunday and preying on his neighbors the other six days of the week!

Very obviously this popular conception of the Puritan is a caricature. No man or group of men who answer the above description could ever have accomplished the things in history these men did. The essence of a caricature is distortion. Caricature is possible only by taking some outstanding characteristic and magnifying it out of all proportions.

Consider who the Puritans were. Milton was a Puritan. Ranked with Shakespeare, Dante and Homer as one of the greatest poets who ever lived he is one of the immortals. Of him Wordsworth wrote a century or more later, in the glowing lines we have previously quoted, "Thou shouldst be living at this hour."

Cromwell was a Puritan, a gentleman farmer, who whipped an undisciplined army of yeomen into one of the finest fighting forces that ever fought in battle.

John Hampden was a Puritan, of whom Macaulay says in his essay: "In Hampden, and in Hampden alone, were united all the qualities which, at such a crisis, were necessary to save the state: the valor and energy of Cromwell, the discernment and eloquence of Vane, the humanity and moderation of Manchester, the stern integrity of Hale, the ardent public spirit of Sydney. Others might possess the qualities which were necessary to save the popular party, in the crisis of danger; he alone had both the power and the inclination to restrain its excesses in the hour of triumph. Others could conquer; he alone could reconcile. He had the sobriety, the self-command, the perfect soundness of judgment, the perfect rectitude of intention, to which the history of revolutions furnishes no parallel, or furnishes a parallel in Washington alone."

These men were Puritans. They belonged to a moral aristocracy. They set their faces against a pleasure-loving and corrupt generation; they fought political corruption and tyranny; they championed the rights of the disinherited; they set their faces against exploitation; they set great store by the soul and the qualities of the spirit; they saved liberty and free government. These men were stern; yes. But are we stern enough? They may not have given a large enough place to pleasure in their lives. No one doubts that we make too large a place for it. They may have been over-zealous in things of the spirit and exalted religion too much. But there is no gainsaying that we are not religious enough.

Is there not need for the revival of such a moral aristocracy today? Who can doubt it?

A Pastoral Prayer

By Ralph W. Sockman

OUR Father in heaven, we come to hold high communion with Thee. We are ever forgetting Thy Fatherhood; but in our needs we are ever remembering our childhood. As erring children to an earthly father, we come confessing our faults but claiming our kinship.

Thy ways are higher than our ways as the heavens are high above the earth; but Thou hast placed a spirit within us which restlessly reaches upward. The glimpses of Thy goodness will not let us sleep in our sins. The things that are seen and temporal cannot satisfy our souls, which crave the things which are unseen and eternal. Help us, O Father, to feel Thy nearness so that our dim and distant yearning may be quickened and our lives may be lifted out of their littleness.

Hearten us, O God, with the consciousness that we are seeking Thee in the company of a vast fellowship, visible and invisible. Remind us that we are not pilgrims on a lonely road but followers of a path which saints have trod. Let us hear the footfalls of those who have gone before us and those who will come after us. Help us to remember that others have rounded those corners which look so mysterious ahead, that others have gone through the fogs of doubt which shroud our way. Give us to feel the touch of those who march beside us toward the goal of Thy Kingdom that we may not falter in our faith or lag in our pace.

Our Father, we ask from Thee those aids peculiar to each age of life. We pray for the little children who lean on us for strength and look to us for leadership. May they not be thwarted and dwarfed at the very threshold of life, but may they be so welcomed into this world that they may feel it to be a Father's House of many mansions. We pray for the young people, that the difficulties of this present hour may not dim their hopes but may develop in them that faith which overcometh the world. Let them not lose their confidence in Christ-like things. We pray for those of the middle years, the heads of our homes, the managers of our business, the teachers of our youth. May those who bear the burden and heat of the day so stand up to life that society may survive these troublous times. We pray especially for the aged, that the ripening experiences of living may bring out the rich flavors of life and that the lengthening shadows of earth may find them unafraid.

Grant, O God, that these gifts which we ask for ourselves may become in our hands contributions to those about us. Transform our strength into service and our knowledge into guidance. Touch our spirits with wisdom that we may the better take hold of the tasks which await our acceptance. Move through us out into all our circles of association. Make us worthier citizens of our city, with hearts more sensitive to its sorrows and hands more responsive to its appeals. May our loyalty to country lift our leaders to high endeavor, and make us faithful in following them toward the mark which Thou hast set for our nation. Grant that our sympathies may go out to the lands across the sea until we shall feel our kinship with all Thy children.

These, and all those intimate personal petitions which can not be voiced in public, we ask in the name and spirit of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Labor Sunday Message, 1934

(Issued by the Executive Committee of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, through its Department of the Church and Social Service.)

AMERICAN business and industry stand at the judgment seat. An administration pledged to the welfare of the forgotten man has announced its purpose to bring about such economic adjustments as will result in work and a living wage for all, under conditions in the establishment of which the worker has a voice through representatives of his own choosing; to promote constructive cooperation instead of disastrous competition in business; to secure a more just distribution of the wealth of the country in order that our vast resources may answer the human needs hitherto unmet even in years of prosperity; to afford relief to the sorely beset farm population of the country; to accomplish the release of children from premature toil and their return to school and to an adequate preparation for the responsibilities of life; to effect economic planning in the place of the adventurous but socially disastrous individualism of the past.

THE TEST OF LEADERSHIP

The measures proposed are of human origin and therefore fallible. But the purposes sought are divine in their character, if, as we steadfastly believe, the heart of Jesus Christ is a revelation of the divine. He cared whether men were cold, or hungry, or sick. He felt the woes of those in bondage of any sort, and longed for their freedom. Many goals sought by the present leaders of American affairs are indisputably in harmony with the purpose and spirit of Jesus. Whether these goals will be attained will depend upon the wisdom of separate measures adopted, upon the character of the economic system itself, and certainly upon the spirit of those in control of our economic life. If they can replace lust for personal power and profit by devotion to production and distribution for the common good; if they can look beyond the interests of their own class to the good of all the people; if they can rise to the realization that isolation is folly and that there cannot be a prosperous America in an impoverished world; if they can achieve a consciousness of the stewardship of their talents and their property, history will vindicate them as it writes the story of their emancipating leadership in a day of great crisis.

Labor is also on trial. While the difficulties of organization at a time of vast unemployment are very great and the opposition serious, labor has an opportunity to gather the working men of America into a national federation of mutual loyalty and service, and to promote those compacts which will stabilize industry and secure to labor the benefits of generously rewarded efficient toil, while protecting the just interest of industry and the public. The verdict upon labor leadership is now being written. Will it record the operation of an inflexible purpose to include all toilers of every race and industry, whether skilled or unskilled, in the membership and service of their organization? And will it reveal that the underprivileged and dispossessed, if adequately supported in their right to organize by government, industry and the public, can claim and win their human rights and privileges without the hatred and bitterness of class war?

The general public is at the bar of judgment. The measures now being tried and any others which give any promise of a cure of our social sickness, demand an integrity, a spirit of fair play, a capacity for long views, a willingness to surrender personal privilege and to share, such as have seldom been sought at the hands of any population in peace time. The inauguration of a New Era largely awaits the appearance of enough new people with new social outlooks and attitudes. Codes alone cannot give us a better society. There must be consecrations, too.

THE DEMANDS OF RELIGION

The church also is on trial. How can it urge cooperation in economic life, and at the same time be unwilling to move forward in effective cooperation among denominations? Can it call forth devotion to the public welfare and create social leadership in extraordinary courage, unless its ministers show equal devotion and courage in social interpretation and action? Can the church foster social idealism and inspire resolute action to break the power of entrenched selfishness, if large sections of it deny or are indifferent to the social implications of the gospel?

Were a prophet of Israel to arise among us he would again take up the cry of yesterday: "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment; relieve the oppressed; judge the fatherless; plead for the widow." And should Jesus stand once more in our midst, we would hear his voice saying, "I was an hungered and ye fed me, naked and ye clothed me, thirsty and ye gave me drink. Inasmuch as ye did it unto the least of these, ye did it unto me." The best way to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, give drink to thirsty bodies and souls, is to make it possible for them to provide for themselves. Such provision waits not upon technical skill only, but upon the birth in our hearts of the spirit of him who saw every man as God's child.

REFORM MEASURES NOT ENOUGH

A truly Christian concern for people calls for the careful scrutiny of reform measures. We want no slight healing of the hurt of our people, no crying, "Peace, peace, when there is no peace." There are grave questions which must be answered. Can the removal of land from production be the Christian answer to cries of hunger around the world? Can an arbitrary inflation of money such as has been proposed in some quarters be the straight road to justice between debtors and creditors? Can a system built about profits yield an adequate development of personality? Can liquor sold for private profit and taxed for public revenue enrich a people? Can huge military and naval expenditures be looked on by any sane man as a contribution to world peace?

As churches we cannot give the final word upon economic schemes, but in the name of Christ we must pass judgment upon the results of every social economy. We must inquire as to the actual number of unem-

ployed, the degree to which the organization of labor and of consumers has advanced in comparison with the organization of employers, and the net gain in the redistribution of income and purchasing power as reflected by more rapid advance in wages and consumer income than in the cost of living. And we must insist that economic experiment shall proceed until it evolves a social order in which men and women everywhere shall have a real opportunity for the good life.

Once again we announce our purpose as churches and religious organizations to help recreate men and women in the spirit of Christ so that there shall be in America an increasing body of citizens whose master passion shall be the building of the kingdom of God.

Timely Verse

The Master of Laborers

O Master of the common weal,
The shop, the field, the market place,
Thou knewest all the pangs we feel.
Thou knowest all our need of grace;
And where the world's injustice goads
The weary, on the climbing roads,
Stoop once again with tender voice,
Though clanging discord fills the air,
To whisper hope and bid rejoice
All who the world's oppression bear.
O master of the toiling clan,
Thou Son of God! Thou Son of Man!

GEORGE EDWARD DAY.

Prayer of the Unemployed

LORD, I do not ask for houses of steel,
Nor houses built of stone;
But for the exultation to feel
The tug on muscle and bone.

Not for wealth or men at my commands,
Nor peace when I am through—
I only ask work for these hands,
Work for these hands to do.

RAYMOND KRESENSKY.

The Revelation

GOD'S revelation of Himself may be
Ofttimes within the pages of a book,
But all times and forever in a look
Of hill-tops banked with blue infinity;
Forever in the branches of a tree
That leans in whiteness o'er a summer nook;
In iris plumes where waters turn and crook
And make slim paths of yellow down the lea!

God's skies are wide above an earthly throne;
His stars are candles on the altar there;
His clouds, an incense drifting into space!
His love with every dewy rose is shown;
The violets a kindly message bear;
And in the dawn we see Him face to face!

LESLIE CLARE MANCHESTER.

The Gospel of Labor

THIS is the Gospel of Labor—
Ring it, ye bells of the kirk—
The Lord of love came down from above
To live with the men who work.
This is the rose that he planted
Here in the thorn cursed soil—
Heaven is blessed with perfect rest;
But the blessing of earth is toil.

HENRY VAN DYKE.

Aristocrats of Labor

THEY claim no guard of heraldry,
They scorn the knightly rod;
Their coats of arms are noble deeds,
Their peerage is from God!

W. STEWART.

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The Minister as Priest

By Andrew Gillies

WE long ago learned that the rigid division of man's inner life into knowing, feeling and willing is rhetorical rather than real. In actual everyday life they merge into one another. As a matter of fact, there is no such thing as a purely intellectual process, and there is no such thing as an act of the will, unrelated to the emotions. In every thought and act and feeling something of the whole man has a part.

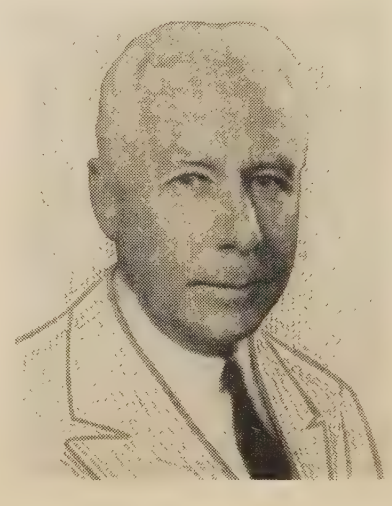
In the same way the serious student of the Christian ministry is learning its inescapable unity. He is learning that it is impossible to separate each function absolutely from the other functions. Much of a man's finest pastoral work is done through the sanctities and intimate personal inspiration of the public service. Some of a true prophet's most stupendous and telling utterances fall from his lips during the unpremeditated pleadings of a personal conversation. And, as every true minister knows, the most effective exercise of the priestly function, the most real leading of immortal souls into the presence of the Infinite through an act of personal communion often occurs during the preaching of the sermon or in the unfeigned ministries of the sick-room.

● *A Total Ministry Essential*

The true prophet is also a priest. The effective pastor is and must be something of a prophet. And even though one man stresses one phase of the work and another, its vital unity remains a fact. Moreover, this very unity makes a total ministry essential. An emasculated ministry, one from which any of the three essential elements has gone, is a sorely crippled and ineffective ministry. It is inevitable that those elements should enter into the work of different men in different proportions.

I am not forgetting that Paul said some are pastors, some prophets, some teachers. And in some vast city parishes, the subdivision of ministerial labors must prevail. But what I am trying to say is that something of each must be in the complete and most effective ministry, and that the neglect or loss of any of these functions by the church as a whole will leave us an ineffectual church. It will leave us vainly trying to do with a part of the divine equipment and programs that which can be nobly and perfectly done only with the whole.

But, as a matter of fact, isn't that just what has happened? Isn't it true that one deep and glorious note has dropped out of this sublime chord of the praise and service of God? Here, a few years ago, was the revered founder of the Christian Endeavor movement warning the Protestant churches of the imminent peril of what he aptly called "sermonolatry." Here is a brilliant writer insisting that one of the pressing needs of the present hour is a new-born conception on the part of believing people of "the sheer



Andrew Gillies

value of worship." And here is a whole church drifting steadily toward an overemphasis of the fruits of the religious life and an underemphasis of its roots, crying justly for such an expression of one's faith as shall make the whole life of the whole race Christian, and neglecting those very inner elements that make for the creation of a victorious faith and a Christian spirit.

● *"The Sheer Value of Worship"*

It is all very well to insist upon such an expression of the religious life as shall square with the purpose of God and the need of the race, but, as Jesus made clear by his teaching and method, the first essential in the whole enterprise is to have some religion to express.

"The sheer value of worship." That is a glorious phrase, a phrase over whose measureless content we could mull for months without exhausting it. It takes us back to that momentous day when the ark of the covenant was placed in the completed temple, and the children of Israel waited expectantly before him, and Solomon prayed for the blessing of Jehovah, and of which the ancient record says, "And the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord." It takes us back to that exalted experience of the prophet of which he says simply, "In the day that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord, high and lifted up." And, above all else, it reveals to us once more that tender pastoral scene among the hills of Samaria which had its exquisite consummation in those tender words of Christ, "The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship him."

Are those ancient phrases meaningless and impotent in this day of widened knowledge and cynical disillusionment? Have they no significance for us at a time when the whole world is in chaos, when a whole race gropes in moral midnight, and when organized religion gives suspicious indications of being more organized than religious?

Rather, do they not stand for a holy something, a divine-human, permanent spiritual something which must be restored to the church and the world if there is to be manifest in us that dynamic without which our ceaseless activities are like the dizzy revolutions of the whirling dervish and our so-called programs the futile dreams of a crippled and impotent institution?

● *Passing Up the "Preliminaries"*

I hear good people in our Christian churches still talk about "the preliminaries." I know many who deliberately plan to reach the church on Sunday morning just in time to hear the sermon. I know of churches where the singing is execrable, the prayer is an extemporaneous soliloquy on contemporaneous events, the reading of the scripture is a meaningless mumbling to which no one pays the least attention, and where the spirit of reverence and adoration is as foreign to the whole proceedings as it is to the activities of the public marketplace. And I know of many to whom the holy communion is nothing more than an occasional and unwelcome event to whose ecclesiastical requirements they must submit because tradition sanctions it and custom requires it. And I wonder if we sense the fact that the remedy lies with and in the ministry.

The net result of our preaching of the half-truth that there is no line of demarkation between the sacred and the secular would seem to be the reduction of the house of God to the

level of the theater or the town hall and the death of that awesome reverence which dwells at the very heart of religion.

It is not the elaboration of the service that is called for; it is its vitalization. It is the injection into it of spiritual vitality, not by the raucous blatting of jazz melodies disguised as hymns, but by the lifting up of the whole heart of the whole congregation in united prayer, by the exalted and exalting service of the psalter, and by the reverent singing of those majestic hymns which constitute the precious heritage of the followers of Jesus Christ. It is in such a revaluation of personal and corporate worship as shall make conscious commerce with God the common experience of those who have named the Name that is above every name.

But that, I believe, means two things to those of us who are known as ministers of the gospel.

● *Studying the Art of Worship*

It means such a careful and intelligent study of the art of worship as shall make us masters of it. And I make no apology for saying that the effective leading of a group of people in the act of worship is an art. If what Phillips Brooks called "the piety of extemporaneousness" in preaching is reprehensible in the preacher and a prime cause of the decay of a vital and intelligent faith among the people, the same slovenliness in the conduct of public worship and the administration of the sacraments is still more reprehensible and the explanation of the modern loss of awe and reverence in approaching the Infinite.

Albert Parker Fitch says that, while multitudes consider themselves religious because they are benevolent or active in good works, no man is really religious until he is devout. If that is true, then God help us. And it is true. But that happy medium between an illusory trust in the magical power of certain forms and ceremonies and the irreverent, flippant, heedless behavior of the ordinary congregation in the evangelical churches will never be attained by irritating rebukes, shrewish scoldings or heated exhortations. It will be attained when the whole service, however simple in form, is made to lure the most careless with its indefinable beauty, to rouse the most hardened with its resistless appeal, and to leave the most materialistic with the consciousness that they are here and now dealing with reality.

● *Spurgeon's Artless Art of Worship*

But no man, however gifted, can bring about such momentous results to whom the priestly function is not of immeasurable importance and the preparation of his whole personality for its exercise a matter of intelligent and systematic effort.

Dr. Jowett says, "You should have heard Spurgeon read the 103d Psalm." Yes, and you should have heard him pray. And you should have heard the thousands assembled in that plain tabernacle sing the great Christian hymns. There was a man so indifferent to the conventionalities and recognized requirements of the ministry that he even refused to be ordained. He said, with a touch of unnecessary irony, that he was not going to have ecclesiastical superiors lay their empty hands on his empty head. And yet here was a man who, without the exalted influence of stately cathedral or elaborate service, without even that assistance of a choir which we deem so essential, transformed an ugly room into a veritable holy of holies, fostered in the hearts of the most ignorant and indifferent a spirit of worship, and, by his masterly conduct of a simple service made the presence of a holy God a living reality. Now he didn't happen to do it. Nor did he do it in a lawless or mysterious way. He did it by sensing the essential elements of true worship and incorporating them in his service.

● *An Experiment in Worship*

I had one personal experience in the ministry which proved to be of permanent value. Years ago, a group of us in the city of Minneapolis established the custom of a union Good Friday night service. Dr. Freeman, of St. Mark's, now bishop of the diocese of Washington, was one. Dr. Lathan Crandall, who has passed into the unseen, was another. Dr. John Bushnell, of Westminster Presbyterian, was another. It proved to be a service of immense popular appeal. It seemed impossible to find a church large enough to hold the throngs who came. But it seemed to me that, in our own church we ought to have something which, historically and spiritually, would lead up to this great union service. So I established a service on Maundy Thursday evening which was devoted solely and entirely to the observance of holy communion. There was no sermon, no address of any kind. There was the reading of the ritual, the response by the choir, and the administration of the elements to the kneeling worshipers. And of all the services held in our church throughout the whole year, that proved to be one of the most largely attended and one of the most impressive. Moreover, I noticed one thing in which the most devout would have had genuine delight. Following the benediction, the usual talking and visiting were almost entirely absent. In silence and deep thought, the people found their way out of the church and toward their homes.

I say, too, that this all means that the true minister must give unceasing attention to the culture of his own spiritual life. I sometimes wonder, again, if the modern minister's most serious difficulty is not due, not so much to that "fog in theology" which is the natural result of the present period of religious reconstruction, as to that enormous pressure upon him which draws him constantly from the contemplative to the active in the religious life. The world is too much with us. There is no doubt about it.

● *Brooding Over the Eternal Verities*

And again I insist that it is all wrong. It is wrong not simply because good preaching calls for time to brood over the eternal verities and the mysteries of life, but because that maximum of spiritual power essential to effective spiritual leadership can be attained only by constant communion with God. We are in danger of becoming like a lot of department store deliverymen, so busy attempting to deliver goods to the public that we have no time to eat or sleep.

Or, to change the figure, it is fair to assume that our ministry would be richer in the things that outlast time and vastly more far-reaching in its influence, and our services would be richer in spiritual things, if we did less broadcasting and more listening in.

It has been said of St. Augustine that his intellectual greatness had its roots in the solitary adventures of his soul. And, in telling of the unusual power of Brooke Herford's quiet ministry in the city of Boston, Dr. Charles R. Brown quoted a busy traveling man as saying: "I hardly know why I enjoy going to his services. Perhaps it is because he is so reverent and so real in his religion. It does me good for weeks just to hear him pray."

● *The Tides of the Infinite*

Such coveted powers, I say, are not attained except at the price God has placed upon them. We do not need to lessen one inch the scope of the church's modern program. To go back to the incomplete interpretation of the divine purpose and of the meaning of religion which handicapped us years ago would be worse than spiritual suicide. We are living in a complex and critical age, in an age of vast moral and spiritual ferment with its consequent change. And we must strain every nerve to meet the demands of that age, to make a generation steeped in the things of time see the Invisible and love the Eternal.

But to do just that—to make God real to the people of our time and to lift the life of the race to higher moral and spiritual levels—I believe we must have time to stop straining every nerve and get away from it all. We must have ample time to let the tides of the Infinite flow into our souls and then through us into the life of mankind.

WHO'S WHO in THIS ISSUE

DR. FREDERICK W. NORWOOD, *who* has for many years led the activities of the famous City Temple, London, is soon to complete a year's tour of many lands, to which he has brought stirring messages of good will and peace. He is now in this country, but he expects to be back in the Temple pulpit this autumn.

After spending a number of years in Methodist pastorates, and in various secretarial positions, Dr. ARLO AYRES BROWN became president of the University of Chattanooga in 1921. Closing his work there in 1929, he was called to the presidency of Drew university, where he is now serving.

Rev. CARL S. PATTON *came to the First* Congregational church, Los Angeles, in 1917, and remained there until 1926, when he became professor of homiletics and practical theology at Chicago theological seminary. When he decided to return to the pastorate in 1929, his former congregation in Los Angeles called him again to lead their church. This autumn he begins a new task—as professor of homiletics at the Pacific school of religion at Berkeley, Cal.

Following pastorates in Oakland, Cal., Cleveland, O., and El Paso, Tex., Rev. DWIGHT BRADLEY went to First Congregational church, Webster Groves (St. Louis), Mo., in 1920, and ministered there for ten years. In 1930 he went to the First Church in Newton Centre, Mass., and has recently accepted a call to the pastorate of Union church, Boston, and to the chair of social ethics in Andover-Newton seminary. Dr. Bradley delivered the sermon published in this issue before a group of ministers.

Rev. CLYDE MCGEE'S *first pastorate* was in Wisconsin—at the First Congregational church in Clinton, where he served for five years. Since 1910 he has ministered at the Bethany Union church, Chicago—the oldest union church west of the Alleghenies.

From 1908 to 1911 Rev. CLARENCE A. SPAULDING was Rhodes scholar at St. John's college, Oxford. Graduating from Auburn theological seminary, Dr. Spaulding held pastorates in Pasadena and Santa Barbara, Cal., and in 1931 came to the leadership of the First Presbyterian church, River Forest, a suburb of Chicago. He served as vice-chairman of the National commission of the Presbyterian church on marriage, divorce and remarriage, and is now chairman of the social relations department of the Chicago presbytery.

Rev. RALPH W. SOCKMAN *is minister of* Christ church, Methodist Episcopal, New York city.

Rev. ANDREW GILLIES *is minister of the* Third Presbyterian church, Rochester, N. Y.

TITLES AND TEXTS

What Pulpit Readers are Preaching About

STANLEY A. HUNTER, St. John's Presbyterian, Berkeley, Cal. "Wanted—A Sense of Sure Direction." John 7:17—"If any man willeth to do his will, he will learn of the doctrine. . . ."

ABRAHAM J. FELDMAN, Temple Beth Israel, Hartford, Conn. "A New Deal." Ezekiel 36:25-27—"And I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you. . . ."

MERRILL F. CLARKE, Congregational, New Canaan, Conn. "If You Can Find a Man." Jer. 5:1—"Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man. . . ."

FOR YOUR SERMON AND TEXT

Title of sermon

. . . . . .

Text used (Write out the text)

. . . . . .

Name of minister

. . . . . .

Name of church

. . . . . .

Address

FREDERICK P. FREEMAN, First Baptist, Somerville, Mass. "A Large Life on Small Income." 2 Cor. 6:10—"As poor, yet making many rich."

B. R. BAUMAN, First Evangelical, Fergus Falls, Minn. "Back to the Living Fountain!" Jer. 2:13—"For my people committed two evils: They have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that hold no water."

H. RALPH HIGGINS, St. Mark's Episcopal, Grand Rapids, Mich. "In the Cool of the Day." Gen. 3:8—"And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day."

A. E. COOKE, Boulevard Congregational, Denver, Colo. "Dare the Churches Be Christian?" Rev. 3:8—"Behold I have set before you an open door, and no man can shut it."

HAROLD H. CRAMER, Parkway Community, Milton, Mass. "'Reel' Life Versus Real Life." Phil. 4:8—"Whatsoever things are true . . . . think on these things."

WARREN E. JACKSON, First Baptist, Traverse City, Mich. "God's Way for Society." Amos 5:24—"But let justice roll down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream."

LOY E. LONG, director of social welfare work, Sholapur, India. "Rediscovering the Religion of Jesus." 1 John 3:6—" . . . . to live as he lived."

OSCAR M. ADAM, Grace Methodist, Coshocton, O. "A Livable Religion." Luke 10:28—". . . . this do, and thou shalt live."

The Editor's Page

The Event of the Month

NOBODY knows what the German ballot-boxing signifies, except that a mood of helplessness has settled down upon the German people. But whether Hitler is as strongly entrenched as the polling of a ten to one vote in his favor would seem on its face to indicate, is profoundly dubious.

Hitler Again Counts Heads

The British and French press make much of the fact that in the voting of last year at the time of Germany's withdrawal from the League of Nations, only four per cent said no, while this year ten per cent say no. This may have some significance, but the gross approval is so overwhelming in both ballots that a slight variation in the size of a negligible opposition would seem to be itself negligible. Hitler capitalized the Hindenburg "will" for all it was worth—and its worth was beyond calculation. The authenticity of this "will" bequeathing the successorship to Hitler is called in question gravely in Switzerland, France and England. The story goes that von Papen, Hindenburg's friend, saved his own life at the time of the "bloody purge" of June 30 by securing the will and writing into it the Hitler bequest, presenting it to Hitler as the price he was willing to pay for the protection of his own head. This may or may not be true, but a government that came to power by setting the reichstag building afire, as all the world believes, would not hesitate to prompt a simple little forgery and to accept the fruits thereof. The effect of the plebiscite on the church situation will probably be direct, immediate and substantial. It adds power to Reichbishop Mueller, Hitler's man, who has already taken steps to crush the intransigent forces within the evangelical church. Karl Barth, who has taken a strong stand against the invasion of the church by the state, is at this writing in Switzerland, on vacation, and it is said that he probably will not be allowed to return to Germany. He is a Swiss citizen. The economic situation is growing more acute every month, but Germany sees no alternative more promising than to rest its fate in Hitler's hands.

The Book of the Month

BEYOND DAMASCUS, *by F. A. Spencer. Harpers, $3.00.*

MY scholarly friends find much to be desired in this life of the Apostle Paul. I share their criticisms in some respects, but they do not shake the favorable estimate on the basis of which I voted for its adoption by the Religious Book club for August. It is a highly colored reconstruction of the environment through which Paul moved, from his home in Tarsus, through his student days at the feet of Gamaliel, his conversion to Christianity and his prodigious and unwearied missionary career. The author is an authority on the life of the ancient classic world. His study of the specific problems connected with Paul may not be so profound as his knowledge of the classic world in general, but he has rendered a real service by lifting the apostle out of the comparative vacuum in which the New Testament leaves him and placing him in the actual world through which his stormy career was passed. If there are anachronisms, they can be corrected by the student. If the author has not shown how Paul's changing environment and experience affected Paul himself and his message, there are other books which will do that for us. But as a work of historical imagination, dramatizing the activities of the great apostle and reviving the age and the customs which set the thought-forms in which the apostle expressed his conception of Christianity, this book will be found invaluable to every reader be he minister or layman.

A Thought for the Month

THE MINISTER'S most delicate task is to comfort people who sorrow. What can he say? Oftimes, perhaps, he says too much. He wastes his words. Sometimes sympathy and comfort are best expressed in silence. Subtle influences radiate from silent sympathy and go where words cannot reach.

Gallantry in Suffering

But whether by our speech or our silence, I think the best thing we can do for those who suffer is to evoke in them the spirit of gallantry in bearing their sorrow. By that I mean to suggest that sorrow brings its own peculiar responsibility. Yet we treat it as if it were a passive thing, a thing that just happens to people, and which must be offset by some solacing thought or some ministration passively received. There is a deeper approach. We may not be able to explain God's relation to their sorrow, but we can suggest to them how all of us depend upon them for courage to bear our own sorrow. If it were not that we are all bound together in a human fellowship of suffering I suppose no one of us would be able to face the griefs, the disappointments, the failures, the frustrations, the denials of hope which life brings. You suffer, yes. And I suffer, too. And if I see you gallantly bearing your cross, I am reproached for my weakness, my whining, my stubborn irreconcilability. It is your way of meeting your grief that gives me heart to meet mine. It is the fact that *some* men and women walk so bravely into the shadow and come out with radiant faces—it is this fact which gives the rest of us courage when our turn comes. This is the deepest cure for despair or rebellion—this awakening of the moral chivalry that is in every soul. If I were a pastor I should study how I might stress this in my personal contact with sorrowing people and in my preaching, seeking to evoke that gallantry of spirit which initiates every sufferer into the glorious company of those who by bearing their own cross bravely have contributed to the salvation of us all.

Charles Clayton Morrison

Next Month . . . The

PRESBYTERIAN
(U. S. A.)
NUMBER
of
The Christian Century Pulpit

This series of special Denominational Numbers began last January with the Northern Baptist Number. The Congregational-Christian Number was published in March. The July issue was a special number celebrating the union of the Evangelical Synod and the Reformed Church in the U. S. The August issue was a special one in honor of the Reformed Church in America.

The fifth in the series of special Denominational Numbers of The Christian Century Pulpit will appear in October—a Presbyterian (U. S. A.) Number. It will include sermons by the leading preachers of that fellowship.

The sermons published in these special numbers have not been selected by the editor of the Pulpit, but as the result of a ballot sent to the ministers of the several denominations, asking this question: "What seven ministers would you select to represent your denomination in its Special Number of The Christian Century Pulpit?" These ballots, returned by these thousands of ministers, have determined the selection of the sermons for these special numbers.

As stated above, four of these Denominational Numbers have already appeared—and now it is the turn of the Presbyterians. And it is quite unnecessary to state that this will be one of the most impressive issues of The Christian Century Pulpit published since its beginning.

The NOVEMBER Issue of the Pulpit will be a general number, and will contain, along with other inspiring messages, sermons especially adapted to the Armistice Day and Thanksgiving Day season.

●

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